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SUBJECT: U.S.-Indonesia Higher Education Partnership Ready for Implementation

REF: A) Jakarta 373 B) Jakarta 379 C) Jakarta 460 D) Jakarta 519 E)
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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In February in Jakarta, the Secretary pledged to expand our bilateral educational relationship and tasked the Mission to seek Indonesian input. On April 6, Ambassador Hume met a key Government of Indonesia education official to seek his input on the proposed higher education partnership strategy. The education official endorsed the outline of our draft strategy and pledged to work with us. END SUMMARY

¶2. (SBU) On April 6, Ambassador Hume presented the Mission's ideas for a U.S.-Indonesia higher education partnership to the Director General for Higher Education, Mr. Fasli Jalal. The Ambassador asked the DG for his input on the four elements of the partnership: namely, improving English-language teaching; improving teacher education; marketing U.S. universities; and building U.S.-Indonesia educational partnerships. The DG endorsed these four elements of our partnership and assured that the Ministry of Education was prepared to cooperate. The Ambassador and the DG agreed that these activities would work best as a mutually beneficial partnership of equals.

¶3. (SBU) The DG agreed that better English-language teaching is vital for Indonesian students entering high-quality university programs in the U.S. To increase English fluency, the Government of Indonesia directed that there be at least one "international standard" elementary, secondary, and polytechnic public school in every Indonesian region, with heavy emphasis on English-language classes. The Mission's proposal to increase the quality and quantity of English-language instruction in Indonesian at all levels will dovetail perfectly with the Ministry's efforts. The DG recommended that the Mission place English-language instructors (such as Fulbright English Teaching Assistants, Peace Corps Volunteers, or private foundation fellows) at these designated "international standard" schools.

¶4. (SBU) The DG said the Ministry would welcome any U.S. effort to improve teacher education, including distance learning, computer training, and partnering with U.S. companies to increase computer access in Indonesian schools. He explained that Indonesia has 2.7 million teachers who need training in areas like information technology. To that end, the Mission is bringing a U.S. Speaker in June to advise the Ministry on using technology in the classroom. The DG confirmed that the Ministry was working with the Sampoerna Foundation on teacher education and endorsed U.S. cooperation with the Foundation (ref. E).

¶5. (SBU) The DG was particularly interested in the Mission's proposal to build U.S.-Indonesian educational partnerships. The DG agreed on the importance of these partnerships in fostering exchange, expanding joint research, creating joint degree programs, and developing science and technology research. The Ambassador emphasized that university partnerships must be mutually beneficial. He said that American students and academics benefit greatly by interacting with Indonesians in the U.S., but equally important is for Americans to come to Indonesia to study and conduct research. The Ambassador and the DG agreed that creating university partnerships will increase both the number of Indonesians studying in the U.S. and the number of Americans studying in Indonesia.

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